

Appl. No. 10/600,131
Amdt. Dated October 6, 2004
Reply to Office Action of July 6, 2004

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. 6229

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): In a floating offshore structure having a center well and a cylinder-stem assembly received in the center well for supporting a riser, a gap controlling interface guide, comprising:

a. a buoyancy cylinder attached to the upper portion of the riser;

b. a longitudinal wear strip mounted on the exterior circumference of said cylinder, said wear strip positioned at an angle relative to a tangent to the exterior of said cylinder; and

c. a mating guide mounted in the center well of the floating offshore structure at an elevation such that for all vertical positions of the cylinder-stem assembly there is sufficient area of interface with said longitudinal wear strip and positioned at a complementary angle to said longitudinal wear strip such that the gap between said wear strip and mating guide is adjustable.

Claim 2. The gap controlling interface guide of claim 1, further comprising a wear stop attached to said mating guide and facing said wear strip.

Claim 3. The gap controlling interface guide of claim 1, wherein said mating guide is non-compliant.

Claim 4. The gap controlling interface guide of claim 1, wherein said mating guide is compliant.

Claim 5. The gap controlling interface guide of claim 1, wherein at least three sets of said wear strips and mating guides are spaced around the circumference of said cylinder.

Claim 6 (currently amended): In a floating offshore structure having a center well and a cylinder-stem assembly received in the center well for supporting a riser, a gap controlling interface guide, comprising:

a. a buoyancy cylinder attached to the upper portion of the riser;

b. at least three longitudinal wear strips mounted on and spaced around the exterior circumference of said cylinder, said wear strips positioned at an angle relative to a tangent to the exterior of said cylinder; and

c. a non-compliant mating guide mounted in the center well of the floating offshore structure at the same elevation as each of said longitudinal wear strips and positioned at a complementary angle to

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said wear strip such that the gap between said wear strips and mating guide is adjustable.

Claim 7(currently amended): In a floating offshore structure having a center well and a cylinder-stem assembly received in the center well for supporting a riser, a gap controlling interface guide, comprising:

a. a buoyancy cylinder attached to the upper portion of the riser;

b. at least three longitudinal wear strips mounted on and spaced around the exterior circumference of said cylinder, said wear strips positioned at an angle relative to a tangent to the exterior of said cylinder; and

c. a compliant mating guide mounted in the center well of the floating offshore structure at an elevation such that for all vertical positions of the cylinder-stem assembly there is sufficient area of interface with each of said longitudinal wear strips and positioned at a complementary angle to said wear strip such that the gap between said wear strips and mating guide is adjustable.

Claim 8. The gap controlling interface guide of claim 7, further comprising a wear stop attached to said mating guide and facing said wear strip.